

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 7004

By Pody

A RESOLUTION to honor Ligon & Bobo Funeral Home on the occasion of its 100th anniversary.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly find it fitting to recognize those historic Tennessee institutions that excel at serving the citizens of this State in times of great vulnerability and need; and

WHEREAS, one such institution is Ligon & Bobo Funeral Home in Lebanon, which celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2020, marking a century of compassionate service to the residents of Wilson County; and

WHEREAS, Ligon & Bobo Funeral Home has the distinction of being Lebanon's oldest mortuary, and it is currently located in the Robert Looney Caruthers House, which, at 192 years old, is the Cedar City's oldest surviving brick residence; and

WHEREAS, the funeral home traces its inception back to 1920, when Charles Horace "C.H." Ligon and his son, Raymond, began the venture in a building located less than a block off of Lebanon Square; and

WHEREAS, in 1938, C.H. Ligon partnered with his daughter, Vera, and her husband, Alex Bobo; together they purchased the Caruthers House at 241 West Main Street and gave the business its current moniker, Ligon & Bobo Funeral Home; and

WHEREAS, the Caruthers House was completed in 1828 for attorney-politician Robert Looney Caruthers, who was married to Sally Sanders, niece of Rachel and Andrew Jackson, in 1827; and

WHEREAS, one of Lebanon's most important and consequential early residents, Mr. Caruthers was named state attorney for the Lebanon circuit by Governor Sam Houston; he

served as a state legislator as well as a member of the United States Congress (1841-1843) and was appointed to the Tennessee Supreme Court in 1852; and

WHEREAS, Robert Caruthers has been called the "Father of Cumberland University," as he was preeminently responsible for the university's founding in 1842; in 1847, along with his younger brother, Abraham, he founded Cumberland University Law School, which later relocated to Samford University in Birmingham, Alabama; and

WHEREAS, the Federal-style edifice that has served as the home of Ligon & Bobo Funeral Home for more than eighty-two years features a white Greek revival façade, two-story Doric columns, a front portico, a second-floor veranda, 12' 9" ceilings, and a cantilevered, elliptical staircase in the foyer; and

WHEREAS, the home has undergone many renovations and construction projects over the years, beginning in 1948, when C.H. Ligon and Vera and Alex Bobo added a chapel to the building; these three would steward the family business into the 1960s, until 1964, when the business was sold and then passed through the hands of several owners over the next several decades; and

WHEREAS, current owners David Brooks and Clark McKinney purchased the business and building in late 1993 and renovated the structure in 1998, adding rooms upstairs and increasing the total space to approximately 14,000 square feet; this major renovation project added an elevator for more accessibility, moved the casket and embalming rooms upstairs, placed pews in the chapel, and added a carport; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Brooks and Mr. McKinney are both graduates of Smith County High School who became friends while working at Sanderson Funeral Home; Mr. Brooks began working at the funeral home in eighth grade, putting in forty-hour work weeks by the time he was in junior high school, and Mr. McKinney began doing chores at the funeral home when he was fourteen; and

WHEREAS, David Brooks and Clark McKinney have a reverence for the history of their business and the Caruthers House; on the wall near the back of the house hangs a law degree awarded by Cumberland University in 1878 that bears the signature of Robert Caruthers, and in 2003, the owners created a tribute to Ligon & Bobo Funeral Home with Fiddlers Grove Chapel. Located in Fiddlers Grove, the building features a viewing room and embalming room that displays funeral and embalming equipment that was used by C.H. Ligon and Vera and Alex Bobo, possibly some of the same tools the elder Ligon began with a century ago; and

WHEREAS, David Brooks and Clark McKinney continue the legacy of Ligon & Bobo Funeral Home with the help of funeral attendants Wayne Foster and Claudine Bissinger and funeral director/embalmer Jason Ligon; and

WHEREAS, for 100 years, Ligon & Bobo Funeral Home has served families throughout Wilson County, providing compassionate care and exceptional mortuary services while also serving as a link to Lebanon's storied past; and

WHEREAS, it is most fitting that we honor this exemplary Tennessee institution on this special occasion; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we hereby honor Ligon & Bobo Funeral Home of Lebanon upon its 100th anniversary, extending our sincere best wishes to its owners and employees for the future.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy and upon proper request made to the appropriate clerk, the language appearing immediately following the State seal appear without House or Senate designation.